

A

REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, January 13. 1709.

THE last Review following the Scent of an implacable Author, pursuing his Rage against the *Scots*, has brought him down to the whole Body of *Dissenters* in *England*, and the Substance of what his Arguments import, I summ'd up in two Heads.

1. No Salvation without Baptism ; of which I have spoken already.
2. No Baptism, but by an Episcopally Ordain'd Ministry.

The whole Weight of the Matter he places upon the Bishops being the Suc-

cessors of the Apostles, to whom the first Mission of our Saviour was sent, *Matt.* 28. 19. *Go ye, therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them, &c.* — This, he says, is an exclusive Commission, and can descend to none but to those who are the Successors of the Apostles, and those to whom they shall commit it. Now suppose, to lay a Foundation for what shall be said on this Head, I should wave what Objections may lie against this Opinion — And for Argument Sake grant it as amply as it is laid down ; yet it will follow, that I must ask three Questions.

I. Whether

1. Whether the Presbyterians are without a Succession of a Gospel Ministry, even in his Sence?
2. Whether the *Episcopal* Church can prove they have any such Succession?
3. If that Succession be not certain, what Condition their People are in, according to this Doctrine?

1. To enquire, whether the Presbyterians are without a Succession of Ministers? And here we must, as the Church does, go back to a *Popish* Ordination, which the Succession is carry'd thorow, and which, to justifie this Succession, must be allow'd; and from this Ordination we say, our first reforming Ministers in *Scotland* deriv'd, as they did also in *England*— The Question therefore will seem to revolve here, Whether a Number of Ministers legally ordain'd have not Power to ordain other Ministers *without a Bishop*? And for this, among many various Instances, I refer to *Bede* himself, *Lib. 3. Cap. 4.*— *Anno Incarnationis Dominicæ Quingentesimo sexagesimo quinto, venit de Hibernia Presbyter & Abbas, Habitu & Vita insignis, Nomine Columbanum Britannum, prædicaturum Verbum Dei Provinciis Septentrionalium Pictorum.* “ In the Year 565, one “ *Columba* an Abbot and Presbyter came “ from *Ireland*, being a Man Eminent “ for Holiness of Life, and preach'd “ the Gospel to the Northern Provinces “ of the *Picts*;— After this we see the Effect of his Ministry; *Venit autem in Britanniam Columbanus, regnante Pictis Brido Rege potentissimo, nono Anno Regni ejus Gentemq; illam Verbo & Exemplo ad Fidem*

Christi convertit. Here it appears, “ He converted those People to the Faith “ of Christ by his Doctrine and Ex- “ ample. Upon this he built a Monas- “ tery, *Unde & Præfatum Insulam ab eis in Possessionem Monasterii faciendi accepit. Fecerat autem priusquam Britanniam veniret, Monasterium nobile in Hibernia, quod à Copia Roborum Dearmack cognominatur.* “ He had also before he came to *Bri- tain*, built a Monastery in *Ireland*, “ call'd *Dearmagl*.— *Ex quo utroq; Mo- nasterio, plurima exinde Monasteria per Discipulos ejus.* “ From which two Mo- “ nasteries, several others were erected “ by his Disciples.

Now this *Columba* had Disciples, who erected Monasteries, and who ruling in those Monasteries were certainly *regu- lar*, and yet they were only his Disci- “ ples, which, I think, will include being ordain'd by him, and yet he was no Bishop. Nay after this, when there were Bishops, they were inferior to them, the Bishops themselves were sub- “ ject to the Abbots who succeeded him, a shrewd Sign what a Bishop was in those Days, see the same Author. *Habere au- tem solet ipsa Insula Rectorum semper Ab- batem Presbyterum, cuius Furi & Omnis Provincia, & ipsi etiam Episcopi, debeat esse subjecti, juxta Exemplum primi Do-CTORIS illius, qui non Episcopus, sed Pres- BYTER extitit & Monachus*— “ This Island always had a Rector, an Ab- “ bot and a Presbyter, to whom all the “ Province, and even the Bishops them- “ selves, ought to subject themselves, “ according to the Example of the first “ Institutor or Teacher, who was not a Bishop, but continued a Presbyter “ and a Monk.

Thus

Thus far from Bede; and the Learned Sir *James Dalrymple* in his Collections quotes this very Place in proving, that the *Scots Church* kept it self from the Errors of Popery, and maintain'd its Primitive Purity for several Centuries, after the rest of the World was over-run with it, even to the eighth Century— If then the Right of Ordaining might remain in Ministers Episcopally ordain'd, tho' not Bishops themselves, then I say, the *Scots Presbyterian Ministers* are as legally ordain'd, as their *Episcopal Ministers* are ordain'd; since when they reform'd immediately from Popery, their first Ministers were Episcopally ordain'd, and they have been as regular in conveying a Succession, as any Church in the World.

2. Our next Enquiry is, whether the *Episcopal Church* can prove any regular Succession of Priesthood from the first Mission, *i. e.* from the Apostles; and this being their Affirmative, I demand the Proof of our Author, or else he does nothing; for if the Right lies only in the first Mission, if a Succession from that Mission be not made clear, the Right is not clear; and then by his own Rule the Baptism of their Ministers is doubtful, which he says, we ought to avoid.

Now, I am first instructed, that on the baptizing my Infant Child, depends absolutely its Salvation. (*Horrid Absurdity!*) To this another as gross is added, that it depends also upon the Legality of the Administration, *that is,* by his own Explication, the due Qualification of the Person officiating— Well, This Qualification is purely, *that be be appointed to do it,* BY ONE, who

was appointed BY ONE, who was appointed BY ONE, who was appointed BY ONE, who was appointed BY ONE, and so back TO ONE, who was appointed by these *very Apostles*, who were appointed by *our Saviour* in those very Words, *GO and Baptize*, for no other Person can do it effectually.

Now to save him the Labour of finding out One to begin at; I'll take St. Peter, and I'll grant all that Power to be given to St. Peter that can be ask'd. — I'll grant, the Bishops of *Rome*, Successors to St. Peter, carry'd on the Descent of his *Episcopal Power*.

But to clear up my Doubt as a Parent, when my Child comes to be baptiz'd, I must ask two Questions. 1. Is the Descent of the Bishops of *Rome* clear, and has there been no Interruption, but that we are sure this Bishop of *Rome* is legally descended? And tho' I do not pretend to a great Deal of Knowledge in Church-History, I am mistaken, if the Succession from St. Peter is not left doubtful, before four Bishops had rul'd the Church after him.

2. There was a Time, when a great Schism happening in the *Roman Church*, partly upon this very Account; There were several Pretenders to the Power of the Chair, and the Authority of St. Peter, and the Rival Popes setting up one against another; one said, *Lo here*, another *Lo there*; one said, I am of *Paul*, another I am of *Apollo*; one said, *Lo here at Rome*, another *Lo there at Avignon*; and both these canoniz'd Saints, consecrated Bishops, and they again ordain'd Priests, &c. Now the Bishops, thus consecrated by both, could not be both Canonical and Regular, one Side must

must be *spurious* and *irregular*; how then shall I know, whether the Minister, baptizing my Child be descended by a just uninterrupted Succession from the Legitimate Authority of St. Peter, or from a Thief that came not in by the Door, but claim'd by Power and *Usurpation*? — And yet the Salvation or Damnation of my Child's Soul, according to this Author, depends upon the Right Administration, &c.

Now, if this Gentleman pleases but to enter with me a little into the Legitimacy of the Succession to the Ecclesiastick Monarchy of St. Peter. I doubt, I shall be able to prove to him so many Flaws in their Claim, so many Interruptions, *Usurpations*, and irreconcileable Chasms and Difficulties in the Succession, that he will blush for putting the great Stress of Salvation, upon a Thing that is so doubtful — And when he says, the Bishops of Scotland are the true Successors of the Apostles, he will not certainly pretend to speak with Assurance enough for any Man to venture the Soul of his Child upon it.

If he will come to Terms with us, we shall agree with him, that there is as much Evidence of these Things, as is necessary to give us a Satisfaction in the Authority of a Minister of the Gospel, to administer Gospel-Ordinances — And this is sufficient, if they are ordain'd and set a-part, by such who have been from Age to Age acknowledg'd Ministers in the Church of Christ; and this the Ministers of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, and of the Dissenters in England, have as true a Claim to, as any in the World.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

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THE Second Edition of the Tryal and Conviction of the French Committee Appointed for the Management of the National Charity to the Poor French Refugees, — But fully Proved Guilty of Mal-Administration, and very foul Practices, by their own Account, Publish'd in 1707. By My Lord Chancellor's Order. Written Originally in French by Monsieur Narbouet, one of the Distributors, And now Done into English with the Addition of a Preface, a Postscript, a Sharp Memorial Presented to the late King by 77 French Ministers, against the Committee. To this Second Edition is added a full Answer to their late Advertisement of Jan. 4, in the Post Man. Sold by J. Morpew near Stationers-Hall, and by the Booksellers of London and Westminster.

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* * She lives at the Golden-Ball in Hand-Court, over against great Turnstile in Holborn.